

Office of Child Care Licensing

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO CHILD CARE

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This parent guide introduces you to certified and licensed child care in Arizona. It is intended to familiarize you with the rules and regulations that govern certified and licensed child care. It also provides information about the Department of Health Services, Office of Child Care Licensing's role and responsibilities in the child care industry. Also, there is a section that answers the most often asked questions. Any additional information about licensed child care not addressed in this booklet may be obtained by contacting the Office of Child Care Licensing.

MISSION STATEMENT

"To ensure the health, safety and well-being of children in child care centers and child care homes throughout Arizona by establishing appropriate rules, monitoring for compliance, offering technical assistance and training to caregivers, and providing consumer education."

The Office of Child Care Licensing accomplishes its mission by:

- developing minimum standards for child care providers;
- protecting children in child care settings
- ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements;
- providing technical assistance and training to providers and consumers.,
- taking enforcement actions necessary to ensure compliance with standards as set forth by the state of Arizona

STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS

Child Care Centers

Infants	1:5, 2:11
One-Year-Olds	1:6, 2:13
Two-Year-Olds	1:8
Three-Year-Olds	1:13
Four-Year-Olds	1:15
Five-Year-Olds & School-Age	1:20

In child care centers, when children of different age groups are mixed, the ratios apply to the youngest child in the group. Infants cannot be mixed with older children unless there are less than six children in the center. Infants and one-year-old children may not be mixed with school-age children. Child care personnel are required to directly supervise children at all times.

Child Care Homes

All ages	1:5
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In child care homes, the ratio needs to be maintained at one caregiver for every five children. The provider's and caregiver's own children are included in the ratio. A provider may care for up to ten children for compensation, plus an additional five children for whom there is no compensation, for a total of 15 children maximum.

TYPES OF INSPECTIONS

Child care centers are inspected at least once a year, child care group homes semi-annually and, both, as needed to investigate complaints. Visits are also made to provide training and technical assistance. All annual inspections and complaint investigations are unannounced.

VIEWING FACILITY FILES

A public file is maintained in each regional office for the licensed child care centers and child care homes which are assigned to that area. These files contain records of all inspections, complaints, licensing history, articles of incorporation, architectural evaluations, statement of services, list of registered individuals, director's and provider's applications, as well as references. The public files are available for viewing from 8:00a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Copies of statutes and regulations governing the operation of licensed child care centers and child care homes are available in each regional office.

FILING A COMPLAINT

Any individual or agency who suspects that a regulation is being violated may call in a complaint, or send it in writing, to their regional office. Complaints are prioritized based on the severity and risk to children, and are investigated in a timely manner. All complaints and the corresponding investigative reports are available for public viewing, with the exception of confidential complaints which are protected by confidentiality laws.

In each regional office, a licensing specialist is on-duty daily to answer questions and take complaints.

PARENTS' RIGHTS

We recognize that you, as a parent, play the most important role in your child's growth and development. Parents should be closely involved in their child's care. Because you chose licensed care for your child, YOU:

1. have the right to expect that the care that your child receives meets minimum standards as outlined in the child care regulations;
2. have the right to visit any time your child is in care without making an appointment;
3. have the right to see the rooms and outside play area where the child care is provided during operating hours;
4. can review the public file of any child care facility at a regional Office of Child Care Licensing;
5. can request to view inspection reports at the facility;
6. have the right to a written statement of services from your child care center, to include information concerning fees;
7. must give written permission before a provider may take your child swimming or on field trips;
8. have the right to be notified immediately of any serious injury or accident requiring medical attention;
9. can expect that any complaint that you make regarding a violation of a regulation or the care your child is receiving will be investigated by the Office of Child Care Licensing;
10. have the right to be made aware of your child's daily activity and progress.

PARENTS WANT TO KNOW

1. Why should I choose licensed or certified child care?

Department of Health Services licensed and certified providers and their staff are required to be fingerprinted. An extensive background check is done at that time. In addition to the licensing inspections by the Office of Child Care Licensing, facilities are required to have fire, sanitation and safety inspections.

2. Do all persons who care for children in their homes have to be licensed by the state?

No! A person may care for four or fewer children, who are not their own, without being certified. Persons who care for five or more children for compensation must be certified in order to operate legally.

3. How many children may a center care for at one time?

There are several criteria that determine the number of children which may be cared for in a center. The criteria are: (a) square footage for indoor activity area; (b) age of children being cared for in each room. The maximum number of children that the center may care for will be printed on the license.

4. What happens to my child if my home provider becomes ill or has an accident during the day?

Regulations require that each home provider have an emergency back-up person who is on call and available on short notice. The back-up person must be familiar with the regulations and policies of the home. The name, address and phone number of the back-up person is to be posted by the phone.

5. How will I learn about the center's rules and policies?

The center is required to provide the parents with a written Statement of Services which must include, but is not limited to, the following: services offered, hours, admission requirements, payment policy discipline policy, provisions for special needs children, transportation services, field trip procedures, parent responsibilities, routine activities, statement of liability insurance, medication policy and emergency medical procedures.

6. Can the center or home provider give medication to my child?

The center or home provider may or may not administer medication depending on their policy. If your provider chooses to administer medication, there are strict guidelines in the rules which must be followed.

7. What happens if my provider fails to meet some of the regulations?

When the facility is not in compliance, the Office of Child Care Licensing will offer technical assistance to help them return to compliance. If there is a consistent pattern of non-compliance in areas which endanger the health and safety of children, legal action may be taken against the facility. Legal action may include the following: reduction of services, fines, suspension or revocation of the license.

8. How will I know if my provider is meeting the child provider regulations?

You can become familiar with the child care regulations. Upon the requests of parents, providers are required to make copies of inspections available. You may also use the checklist provided in this guide.

9. What will my provider do in an emergency if I cannot be reached?

Parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact persons, in addition to themselves. The provider will try to contact the parent first, and if the parent cannot be reached, the persons listed as the emergency contacts will be called. In the event that parents and emergency contacts cannot be reached, 911 or Child Protective Services will be called.

10. Can the Office of Child Care Licensing recommend a center or child care home?

No, this office does not make recommendations. However, the office does maintain public files.

PARENT RESOURCES

Governor's Office for Children 602-542-3191

Department of Health Services: www.hs.state.az.us

Office of Women and Children's Services 602-220-6550

Office of Children with Special Needs 602-220-6525

Office of Nutrition Services 602-542-1886

Department of Education: www.ade.state.az.us

Child Nutrition Program 602-542-8700

Department of Economic Security: www.de.state.az.us

Child Care Administration 602-542-4248

(Provides child care subsidies to low income families)

Call for referral to the local office in your area.

Child Protective Services:

Maricopa County 602-530-1800

Outside Maricopa County 1-800-330-1822

Division of Developmental Disabilities: 602-542-0419

Call for referral to the local office in your area.

County Health Departments:

Maricopa 602-506-6767

Pima 520-740-8261

Coconino 520-779-5164

Arizona Resources:

Child Care Resource & Referral Services 1-800-308-9000

www.arizonachildcare.org

Parents Anonymous 1-800-352-0528

Samaritan Regional Poison Control Center 1-800-362-0101

Talk for Parents (Parent Support) 480-941-2999

National Resources:

National Association for the Education

of Young Children 1-800-424-2460

National Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-422-4453

This list contains a few of the many resources available. Inclusion in this list does not imply endorsement by the Department of Health Services.